

VZCZCXRO8228
PP RUEHBZ RUEHGI
DE RUEHGI #0275/01 3641601
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P R 301601Z DEC 09
FM AMEMBASSY BANGUI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1112
INFO RHMFISS/AFRICOM
RUEHBZ/AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE 0254
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM 0357
RUEHKI/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA 0370
RUEHLC/AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE 0269
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0208
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 0192
RUEHNJ/AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA 0558
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0546
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0190
RUEHYD/AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE 0534
RUEHGI/AMEMBASSY BANGUI 1407

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BANGUI 000275

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/C
USUN FOR DMUERS
PARIS FOR RKANEDA
LONDON FOR PLORD
NAIROBI FOR AKARAS
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SUBJECT: DDR PROCESS INCREASINGLY LINKED TO ELECTIONS - A DANGEROUS
CORRELATION

REF: A. A 09 BANGUI 272 AND PREVIOUS
[1](#)B. REF: B 09 BANGUI 181

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DANGEROUS CORRELATION
REF A: 09 Bangui 272 and previous
REF B: 09 Bangui 181

[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Two critical and linked realities threaten to derail the progress of the scheduled preparations for the 2010 Central African (CAR) elections: setbacks in implementing the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration program (DDR) and the existence of armed groups outside of the peace process. Although most observers agree that a successful DDR process is vital to create a stable environment for peaceful elections in April 2010, the DDR process continues to experience delays. Pushing back the elections, however, has its own hazards as the constitutional mandates of the President and National Assembly expire in June. A constitutional crisis, while convenient for some individuals with limited public support, would derail the CARs democratic progress and fuel the rebel movements. Therefore, while some flexibility in the first round's date may be advisable, international and national actors involved should avoid conditioning the elections on implementation of a strict DDR timetable, lest it give parties who do not want to see elections an easy excuse to avoid the democratic process. END SUMMARY.

Current State of the DDR

[1](#)2. (U) The DDR process is estimated to require a total of USD27 million. So far financial support has come from the UN Peace Building Fund, sub-regional organizations such as the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) and the Economic Community of Central African States (CEEAC), and

neighboring countries, but a funding gap still remains. Recently the local press announced that Chad, Gabon, and Equatorial Guinea pledged an additional USD 6.6 million. In addition, the Peacebuilding Commission at the United Nations (PBC) has proposed a pledging conference - to be held in early 2010 - in order to increase financing for Security Sector Reform (SSR), a wider program within which the DDR process exists.

13. (U) SSR cannot fully succeed without resolving the issue of the numerous rebel groups, either through DDR or military action by the Central African army. There are currently two major groups outside of the DDR peace process -- the Patriotic Convention for Justice and Peace (CPJP), Democratic Front of the Central African People (FDPC) -- along with a number of smaller armed bands. The opposition has called for the government (CARG) to initiate political dialogue with the remaining militia groups, but so far President Bozize has declined to negotiate directly with the CPJP, preferring confrontation. The FDPC pulled out of the process citing delays in implementation and the murder of two of their members in a Central African jail. The Army for the Restitution of Democracy (APRD), while still adhering to the process, has reestablished check points in its areas of operation and recently turned away a UN convoy headed by Chairman of the PBC in protest against the slow roll out of the DDR program. Additionally, the instability in the northeast has forced the Union of Democratic Forces for Unity (UFDR) to repeat demands that all the other regional groups disarm simultaneously (Ref A).

14. (SBU) UNDP officials in charge of the DDR do not expect the entire process to be completed before the elections, but do believe that the first two phases - disarmament and demobilization - can be completed by mid-April. This, they

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hope, will ensure a sufficiently secure environment to allow free passage throughout the country for election staff, voters, and the possible return of the estimated 162,000 Central African internally displaced people and 130,000 refugees. Progress has been made by the DDR Steering Committee - earlier this month, the long awaited deployment of 31 military observers from CEEAC funded by the EU to oversee the demobilization process finally arrived in Bangui. Yet, even though the UNDP forecasts that the DDR team will complete the first two phases by February 2010, a recent press interview with one of the CEEAC military experts declared that the disarmament process alone will likely take more than three months, allowing implementation of only the first phase of DDR before the first round of elections currently scheduled for April 18.

Delays in the DDR Causing Nervousness

15. (SBU) Although the government and the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) consistently reaffirm their commitment to holding the elections within the timeframe prescribed by the country's constitution, major international partners - France, the European Commission (EC), the UNDP and the UN's Office for Central Africa (BONUCA) - all agree that peaceful and transparent elections will be compromised without further improvement in the security situation in the CAR. The opposition often stresses the need for flexibility within the proposed election timeline and that the dates of the scheduled activities are less important than the conditions on the ground. Some observers speculate that the opposition would prefer a constitutional crisis that would potentially result in a ``government of national unity,'' but until now, their efforts have been brushed aside by the international community and the government (Ref B).

16. (U) The Constitution calls for the IEC to conduct the first round of elections before the end of the current Presidential mandate on June 11, 2009. During a recent meeting of the Electoral Steering Committee, IEC representatives from the ruling party did not object to the opposition statements calling

for flexibility in the electoral timeline, but they were quick to stress that the constitutional mandate must be respected.

¶7. (SBU) The CARG is not always clear about its intentions either. During a meeting with the Secretary General (SG) of Government, the SG stated that it was imperative that the disarmament and demobilization phases be completed before the national elections are held. Nevertheless, the SG was also assured that the IEC had already taken into consideration the DDR process for the elections timetable, because the militia groups who are members of the DDR process are represented by five members on the IEC. It is possible that President Bozize is seeking to maintain some flexibility of action by demanding the timeline be respected, but also acknowledging the necessity of DDR implementation.

¶8. (SBU) COMMENT: BONUCA has stressed the need for the DDR process to move forward, but correctly warned of making the elections strictly conditional on DDR, which could risk compromising the peace-building effort by causing a constitutional crisis. Post agrees with this assessment and cautions against a hasty decision to accept significant delays in the electoral timeline. Any postponement past the constitutional mandate will create a constitutional vacuum and distract the CARG and opposition from the real issue at hand: the elections and effective governance of the Central African Republic. END COMMENT.
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